

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Donna Harrison

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name James Gettys Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 898 Biglerville Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Gettysburg State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 17325-8003

County Adams County

Telephone (717) 334-6254 Fax (717) 337-4434

Web site/URL http://www.gettysburg.k12.pa.us E-mail dharrison@gettysburg.k12.pa.us

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/gettysb

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/GASD SuperOne

urg-area-school-district-

200020023400763/?fref=ts

Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL

http://www.YouTube.com/user/GASD

Media \_\_\_\_\_

Blog \_\_\_\_\_

Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Larry Redding

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

E-mail lredding@gettysburg.k12.pa.us

District Name Gettysburg Area School District Tel. (717) 334-6254

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Todd Orner

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city
  - ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - ☐ Suburban
  - ☐ Small city or town in a rural area
  - ☒ Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	44	23	67
1	28	29	57
2	40	36	76
3	36	41	77
4	34	40	74
5	44	23	67
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	226	192	418

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 9 % Black or African American
  - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 70 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 12%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	31
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	51
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	423
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.121
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %  
14 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 56 %  
Total number students who qualify: 242

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
46 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>5</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	18
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes    No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

To ensure all students achieve maximum growth through high expectations, differentiated support, best practices, and a nurturing environment demonstrating exemplary character in students.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Since 2010, the culture of James Gettys Elementary (JGE) has maintained the focus of helping students “achieve maximum growth through high expectations” through staff teaming, leadership sharing and family involvement. The staff embraces this vision, using it to create an incredibly positive, all-inclusive culture for our students and their families. This vision sets high expectations for all students and, subsequently, teachers hold students accountable for those high expectations. We launch each school year with a school-wide theme which relates to our annual events and promotes a cohesive environment.

The students and families have changed over the past six years. In 2010, our poverty level was in the low 40%. It is now at 56% and growing. We have many more students who are homeless, are in and out of shelters, live in motels, suffer from split families and custody issues, and are not consistently provided with the necessities in life. That has made our job at JGE more and more difficult each year. However, this staff continues to embrace these facts and work hard at providing, not only the academic needs of our students, but the social, emotional, physical, and cultural needs as well.

Our intervention specialists meet bimonthly to discuss academic and emotional needs of our students. The academic needs are discussed during our data team meetings. This support team consists of reading, learning, ESL, and gifted support teachers, and the school psychologist. The emotional needs of our students are discussed at our Elementary Student Assistance Program team meeting. This team consists of our school guidance counselor, psychologist, nurse, building secretary and the building principal. The discussions at these meetings results in contacting parents, working with teachers, and contacting outside community agencies when necessary.

With the many different changes in how we teach students over the last several years, (such as common core, tiered interventions, Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) clustering model, data driven decisions, differentiating instruction, and this year a Hybrid Learning pilot in third grade), this staff has truly embraced every change. We work in Professional Learning Communities, with classroom teachers having common planning time every day. Classroom teachers collaborate at least twice a month in morning meetings with reading, learning, English Language Learners (ELL), and gifted support teachers to plan and analyze data to drive instruction. Although opportunities for professional development are limited, teachers choose conferences that have a great impact on their students, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, classroom management, differentiating instruction, hybrid learning, and supporting students with the autism spectrum disorder. We have consulted with an autistic specialist through our local Intermediate Unit to observe specific students and to provide feedback to teachers on strategies to use with each of these students. This information is passed on from year to year with the support and help of our guidance counselor and school psychologist. The abundance of teaming is only possible through the shared leadership philosophy adopted by the building principal.

Our staff is not only dedicated to providing the most effective, engaging classroom instruction, but providing for the needs of students and their families beyond academics. We organize monthly family events inviting all families to attend. Another example of our efforts beyond academics is the elimination of food scarcity through the Ruth’s Harvest Backpack Program. Through the help of a JGE parent and our community, our school initiated the Ruth’s Harvest program last year, providing food backpacks for over 100 of our students on the weekends. The organization and implementation of this program utilizes the support of custodians, secretaries, and teachers working together.

Another initiative this staff has embraced is the implementation of a School Wide Positive Behavior Plan. Again, this was a collaborative effort by the staff in creating this plan. One teacher facilitated this plan with the support of teachers, our guidance counselor and school psychologist. The plan is titled JGE OWLS SOAR. (Outstanding Wise LearnerS – OWLS) SOAR (school rules: Safe behavior, On task, Act responsibly, and Respect). Teachers nominate students weekly as Good Owls, recognizing students who have gone above and beyond expectations related to student behavior. Names are read over the intercom at the end of the day on Fridays, pictures are taken for our school webpage, and students are treated quarterly to an ice cream party. When nominated, students are sent to the office with their Good Owl certificate so the office staff can also praise students for a job well done.

Our staff welcomes parent volunteers and community support. Many of our teachers welcome not only parent volunteers, but volunteers from the community, from Gettysburg College, retired teachers and administrators.

We are proud of the many key strategies we use to “achieve maximum growth through high expectations.”

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

The English Language Arts core curriculum is focused around Student Learning Maps (SLMs) that are aligned to the PA Core Standards (PCSSs). Reading instruction is structured around the 5 Big Ideas in reading during whole group and small group instruction time. Teachers provide 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction for grades 1-5, (Kindergarten students receive 60+ minutes daily). In addition to the SLMs, the areas of reading instruction are also supplemented with Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), our core reading program. HMH was selected because it includes key elements in reading instruction, from comprehension to decodable readers and is aligned to the PCSSs. Foundations, A Wilson Program, provides students of varying learning abilities with a foundation for reading and spelling. It was selected because it provides teachers with the skills and tools needed to present a structured, sequential, and cumulative phonics/spelling program using multi-sensory teaching techniques. Foundations also thoroughly teaches the Foundational Skills of the PCSSs and significantly supports other PCSSs in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. Kid Writing is a program that presents a systematic approach of phonics instruction and assessment. It was selected because it teaches sounds, letters, and the conventions of writing which can be systematically woven into the classroom core instruction. The combination of a core curriculum, aligned core instructional programs, high quality professional development, instructional coaching and administrative accountability ensures students are receiving targeted ELA instruction that is fully aligned to the PCSSs.

Scientifically Research-based Standard protocol interventions are available for Tiered Intervention groups as prescribed by the benchmarking, progress monitoring and summative assessment data. Specialized staff, classroom teachers, and/or paraprofessionals that have benefited from professional development provide the supplemental instruction and progress monitor the students. All students receive tiered support in an attempt to improve skills and ensure everyone makes at least one year's growth as evidenced by local and Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS) data. Students benefit from at least 30 minutes of supplemental instruction on a daily basis and our most discrepant students are progress monitored weekly to ensure they are on the trajectory for making more than a year's worth of growth. The data team is constantly communicating and monitoring the students' progress to ensure we are on track in our efforts to close the achievement gap.

Everyday Mathematics 4th Edition (EM4) is our core program for K-5 mathematics instruction. EM4 is fully-aligned to the PCSSs and includes mental math, hands-on and digital components aligned to ensure students acquire the foundational skills needed to process complex mathematical thinking. Students benefit from 75 minutes of math instruction daily which includes direct instruction, distributed practice of previously introduced skills, differentiated tasks, assessments and projects. Through the use of pre-assessments, teachers gather data to determine which students are performing above and below grade level. This data is used to develop guided math groups to ensure students receive instruction at their prescribed level.

Science curriculum is focused around SLMs that are aligned to the PA Science and Next Generation Science Standards. The SLMs are supported with children's literature and science kits that provide hands-on learning experiences for the students. Common Assessments are aligned to the standards and the PSSA Assessment Anchors. Advancing Science, an "Educational Improvement Organization" under the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program in Pennsylvania, supports our teachers by providing additional manipulatives, site-based instructional support, formative assessment strategies and professional development for our teachers. Our school wide Science Fair at the end of the year serves as a culminating activity for students to synthesize and apply the scientific method.

Social Studies/history SLMs are aligned to the PA Social Studies standards and are integrated into the ELA instructional blocks when aligned. Instruction is focused on teaching students how to attack non-fiction text with paired readings to support the PCSSs. Living in Gettysburg, PA provides unique opportunities for our students to be immersed in history, make personal connections with classroom instruction, and become



productive citizens in our global society. Our school has developed a partnership with the Gettysburg National Park Service. This partnership not only provides students with field trips and guest speakers, but provides our teachers with professional development opportunities to enhance curriculum and our local heritage.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the core curriculum, our students participate in Physical Education (P.E.), library, general music, and art once in a 4 day cycle for 45 minutes. These special area teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to support the core curriculum. For instance, the physical education teacher does a unit on tumbling that integrates math vocabulary such as right, obtuse and acute angles. Another example is the librarian who teaches students sequencing when using the Dewey Decimal system. She also supports writing skills as she does research projects with the upper grades. The music teacher teaches, not only his music curriculum, but integrates math skills such as counting and patterns. The art teacher supports the core curriculum in such ways as teaching colors and vocabulary words in art and how they relate to other subjects.

Our four special area teachers work collaboratively and with classroom teachers to organize, practice, and present an Artist in Residence (AIR) program for fourth and fifth graders. Every other year our AIR program is The National Circus Project. While this is a more expensive Artist in Residence program, we feel it truly benefits our fourth and fifth graders, not only by participating in the circus, but the program is prodigious in building self-esteem and emphasizing teamwork. Our Kindergarten through third grade students participate in a Fine Arts Program. This program focuses not only on music but movement as well. The music teacher and P.E. teacher collaborate closely throughout the preparation of this program that is then presented to the other grades in school and for family and friends during an evening performance.

The special area teachers provide many other opportunities throughout the school year for our students. Our music teacher offers the opportunity to fourth and fifth grade students to participate in a choral program, performing in a Holiday and Spring concert. Our physical education teacher organizes a Fall Fun Run, Race for Education fundraiser, Gymnastic Show, Field Day, and participation in Jump Rope for Heart, keeping students very actively engaged. In addition, she has implemented Action Based Learning for all kindergarten students first thing every morning. With the help of fifth grade students, kindergarten students learn academics through movement as they rotate through six stations.

Our four special area teachers also help with small group accommodations for benchmark and state testing. Students know each of these teachers as the teacher of art, music, library and physical education, but also interact with them in many other ways throughout the day and year. Education at JGE truly is a team effort.

JGE upper elementary students are offered a variety of enrichment opportunities. Students are offered the opportunity to play a band or orchestra instrument. This program offers individual lessons, group practices and concerts during the winter holiday and spring. The program not only teaches students how to play an instrument, but also teaches them the importance of working together, building their self-esteem. We offer an after school program for 6 weeks each in the fall and spring. For example, in one such program, students get exposure to world language such as Spanish, learning the basics.

We are very fortunate to have supportive technology in our school. In each of our classrooms including our special areas, teachers have an interactive whiteboard to use for instruction. All classroom teachers use this piece of technology as a way of providing engaging and interactive classroom instruction. In addition, grades 1 – 5 and the library each have a cart of 30 laptops. Kindergarten has a cart of 30 ipads. We have 1 other cart of 30 ipads for anyone's use. This technology is in constant use in classrooms for independent work such as learning stations, the writing process, online curriculum support in our Journeys and Everyday Math programs, and independent projects. It is also used for whole group instruction to support curriculum in science and health in the upper grades. James Gettys' teachers have embraced the use of technology in the classroom.

Other curriculum areas do a tremendous job in supporting the education of the “whole child.”

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

At James Gettys Elementary School, teachers create student-centered classroom environments where all students are engaged and challenged to grow as individuals. Teachers employ a balanced instructional framework when determining their methods for teaching the curriculum and designing tiered support. Within the balanced instructional approach all students participate in the standards-aligned core curricula with a highly qualified professional teacher. Administrators, teachers and students exhibit the value of twenty-first century skills through their use of technology as a teaching and learning tool. Teachers utilize a variety of grouping structures, such as whole group, small group and individual instruction in order to tier instruction in the classroom. Within the various structures, teachers craft their lessons using a gradual release of responsibility model with the aim of moving students toward deeper self-regulated learning. Students learn through explicit instruction, guided practice, collaborative inquiry, and independent application of newly learned skills.

All decisions regarding instruction, intervention, and enrichment are based on universal screening data, further diagnostic screening, and ongoing summative and formative data. Teachers design and deliver targeted lessons with the purpose of accelerating student growth along their learning pathway toward grade level performance. Classroom teachers, in conjunction with other specialists, tailor lessons to scaffold student learning of specific skills at their current instructional level. Classroom teachers and interventionists ensure coherence across settings by collaborating to explicitly state learning goals and observe students' growth along their personalized learning trajectories. Grouping decisions are dynamic and when needed, decisions are made to vary the intensity of instruction for students' specific learning needs.

Within the core curriculum, delivered using a balanced instructional framework and through the careful use of data to flexibly group students, teachers further differentiate instruction in a wide variety of ways. Most critically teachers determine students' current levels of performance to match them with resources that keep students working at their zone of proximal development. Teachers further differentiate their instruction by incorporating varying activities to align with students learning styles.

Our comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum includes instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency vocabulary and comprehension. Based on the data, if students need focused instruction in one or more of these foundational reading skills, additional time is available within and beyond the core instructional block. Similarly, in mathematics, teachers target areas of instruction in very specific ways, to address the needs of students who may need targeted instruction in the area of computation, concepts, or applications.

### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Three times a year teachers administer benchmark assessments to all students to determine which students are working below, on or above grade level. Benchmark assessments include: Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next (K-5), 4 Sight (grades 3-5), Development Reading Assessment (DRA - grade 1) and Everyday Mathematics Fourth Edition (EM4) beginning, middle and end-of-the-year assessments (grade 2). A data team compiles the results of the benchmark testing and presents it to classroom teachers. A data team member serves as a point of contact for each grade level to ensure the lines of communication are open between the grade level and data team members. Teachers provide additional qualitative data to the data team. School-wide benchmark testing and additional diagnostic testing results determine the level of intervention necessary in order to ensure students grow toward mastery of grade level skills and standards. Data is used for scheduling tiered interventions to students that are 10 or more percentage points above or below the grade level expected mark. Once established, students in these intervention groups are continually progress monitored to ensure fluid and successful intervention groups. Parents are informed of the targeted intervention and frequently updated about their child's progress.

Formative assessments aligning to our core ELA programs are administered weekly or at the end of an instructional unit. Journeys tests are administered to students to assess their knowledge of skills taught in the week's instructional units. Students not evidencing proficiency receive additional instruction. Foundations assessments are administered at the end of each unit of instruction. Eighty percent of the

students must evidence 80% proficiency on the assessment for the class to move on to the next instructional unit. Students not reaching 80% proficiency receive a “double-dose” of instruction from an interventionist.

The EM4 has formative assessment opportunities embedded in every lesson so teachers are able to monitor students’ progress on a daily basis. The curriculum is developed upon a spiraled approach so previously taught concepts are distributed throughout each unit of instruction. Students not evidencing proficiency in one unit will benefit from another opportunity to reach proficiency in future instructional units. The EM4 manual informs teachers of the frequency of revisited concepts and expected student mastery. Guided math groups are developed based on formative assessments results to ensure students are mastering concepts at an appropriate pace.

All assessments are discussed with parents throughout the school year, either during parent conferences, parent phone calls, Back to School Night, and parent meetings. These discussions include what the assessment assesses, the meaning of the results, and how the results are used.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

James Gettys promotes a culture conducive to student engagement and motivation in many ways. The School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) program reinforces student adherence to the school rules as well as character development. Faculty and staff award “OWL Tickets” to students who “S.O.A.R.” Likewise, faculty and staff reinforce monthly lessons taught by the school counselor about how our “Character Counts” by nominating students who strive to be good citizens, caring, respectful, responsible, trustworthy, and fair. In addition to the immediate recognition students receive with an OWL ticket or a Character Counts nomination, these students are awarded certificates, pencils, honorable mention in announcements, chances to win school store gift certificates, and invitations to special events, such as ice cream parties. At the classroom level, teachers tirelessly implement a variety of behavior management systems that provide students with recognition, positive feedback and rewards.

Many factors converge to create an environment that cultivates students’ academic, social, and emotional growth. Communication and collaboration between teachers on the same grade-level, with specialists, paraprofessionals, parents, and other stakeholders are priorities at James Gettys which ensure academic success. A number of programs engender student development: “Homework Club,” students who need extra support with learning responsibility regarding homework completion meet with a paraprofessional every morning; “Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP),” a group of SAP-trained staff who implement and monitor additional supports for students who have mental/behavioral health challenges that impede learning, to include connecting families to outside resources; “Peer Buddies,” a group of 4th and 5th grade students who have been trained in conflict resolution and friendship skills who help younger students feel included and build friendships during recess; school counseling program; and at least four free after-school programs that are held in the building. School and family partnerships are forged with a number of evening activities and performances that are offered throughout the school year.

The school culture, not only supports and motivates students, but teachers as well. At every staff meeting, “Kudos” are announced, which are compliments submitted by faculty/staff for the exemplary work that their co-workers are doing. Teacher input is highly valued and formal opportunities to offer said input are available at monthly data team meetings and communication committee meetings. Informal occasions of input or seeking out additional support are also welcomed as the principal has an open-door (and open candy basket) policy that invites such communication.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Engaging families and the community has been very successful in our school. We believe it is crucial to have parents and families involved in their child’s education. The partnership between home and school sends a very clear message to our students that working together as a team is the best way to promote student success.

We welcome parents into our classrooms to volunteer or just to visit any time. We provide monthly opportunities in the evenings for families to be engaged in our school. These have included such events as Polar Express Night, Family Breakfasts, Fine Arts and Artist in Residence, Family Bingo Night, Family Movie Night, Parent/Teacher Conferences, Family Health Fair Night, James Gettys Olympics Night, Science Fair Night, Cozy Reading Night and Wax Museum Night. Some of these events highlight certain grade levels. All families are invited to every event. These events are very well attended averaging anywhere from 100 – 400 people at each one. Some events involve students while others are just fun evenings for families.

We are most proud of our participation in parent conferences, averaging between 90%-100% every year. Teachers are vigilant about contacting and meeting with parents. Where necessary, we will provide transportation for our families.

Teachers welcome parent volunteers. These volunteers help with clerical work such as copying and laminating. Other parent volunteers help with small group and individual instruction under the guidance of classroom teachers, giving teachers greater opportunities to differentiate instruction.

We engage our students and families from the very beginning of their school years. In August, our kindergarten teachers, paraprofessionals and building principal visit every new kindergarten student family at their home. We deliver James Gettys t-shirts and a kindergarten book to each student. This is a very exciting time for our new students and their families. We usually see an average of 75% - 90% of our new students in these welcoming visits.

Our school takes advantage of many community opportunities. We've developed partnerships with Gettysburg College and other businesses in town such as Dubbs Karate, Gilly's Bowling, Adams County SPCA, Adams County Council for the Arts, and Adams County National Bank. These partnerships provide such programs as after school opportunities, Junior Achievement Program, fundraising, Advancing Science Program, and classroom tutoring.

We take great pride in engaging our families and the community in the everyday life of our James Gettys' students.

### 3. Professional Development:

Gettysburg Area School District (GASD) is committed to providing teachers and instructional support staff with on-going, job-embedded professional growth opportunities. New hires at JGE are immersed in the district's curriculum and instruction design, Learning Focused Schools (LFS), by attending two full days of training by district-trained trainers. In addition to the pedagogy, the inductees learn how to design lessons that are aligned to the Student Learning Maps (SLMs).

Our teachers attend Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) modules training provided by district trained trainers. These modules prepare our teachers to learn and use our core reading programs. LETRS complements and supports the implementation of our core programs aligned with scientifically-based reading research. The modules build on the overview and introductory content, focusing first on phonology, phoneme awareness, and the writing system (orthography) of English. Modules progress to topics in vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension instruction. Later modules target reading instruction for the primary grades and include a module on assessment for prevention and early intervention. The trainings are provided to our teachers throughout the school year in order for them to put into practice immediately the strategies learned with students.

We have trained teachers to serve as Foundations Facilitators to coach teachers and administrators with the implementation of Foundations. The facilitators are classroom teachers or reading specialists who work directly with students teaching Foundations on a daily basis. Teachers and facilitators collaborate often to discuss data and design appropriate instruction

Our newly adopted core math program, Everyday Mathematics Edition 4 (EM4), training is provided by a district teacher that is trained as an Everyday Math consultant. The trainer has worked with teachers at JGE as needed to ensure all components of the program are implemented with fidelity.

The JGE principal attends all of the professional development opportunities provided to district teachers. In addition the principal has completed Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership courses, using the learned content to enhance leadership skills.

The staff has embraced professional development opportunities building our own capacity in sustaining efforts to maximize student achievement. This includes but is not limited to Foundations facilitators, Wilson Certified teachers, ESL certified, regional Reading Recovery Teacher Leader as well as teachers who have expertise in technology, responsive classroom, hybrid learning, and personalized learning. Additionally, our teachers have been trained in the Framework for Understanding Poverty. This training has made an incredible impact on our staff, sensitizing them to better empathize with the emotional, social, and economic needs of our students.

This expertise allows us to meet the needs of the “whole child.”

#### 4. School Leadership:

The principal at JGE cultivates a trusting environment of shared leadership, knowing that it takes a village to make a difference and to create change. This shared leadership is evident through various teams that allow for the seamless and collaborative operations of daily successes, which lead to life-long successes for our students at JGE. The principal and building level colleagues develop these teams by recognizing, fostering, and trusting the expertise of individuals and their ability to complete the task. These teams include a data team, grade level teams, a communication team, special project teams, after school program teams, and an ESAP team.

While each staff member has their individual responsibilities, everyone is a member of one or more of the leadership teams. These opportunities unfold through assignment or volunteering based upon the principal’s knowledge of the staff and their areas of strength. The entire staff of James Gettys is involved with the many opportunities provided to our students, not only academically, but emotionally and socially.

With 30 successful years of classroom experience, the principal is able to share her experiences with her staff. She has an open door policy, encouraging teachers to share concerns and work toward a solution that is in the best interest of students. A drop by discussion in the principal’s office happens on a daily basis. Staff feels comfortable knowing that they are supported and concerns are heard and acted upon in the best interest of students. Problems are solved collaboratively. Teachers trust her and know that she has walked the walk and is not just talking the talk.

Collaborative team grade level meetings greatly impact the success of our students. Meeting on a bimonthly basis, teachers are given the responsibility to review data and use the results to drive instruction. These team meetings include classroom teachers and interventionists, who share their expertise based upon student needs. The principal trusts and values the decisions made during these team meetings.

The success of the leadership in our school is based on all stakeholders having a voice and knowing they play a vital role in the success of all students in “this village”!

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The one practice that has the greatest effect on our school is how data-driven decisions are used to guide instruction and provide tiered instruction for students, allowing the achievement gap to continually close for all of our students.

Students are assessed three times a year with benchmark testing. In addition, we use core curriculum assessments to help make decisions for children. These results are placed on a spreadsheet and grade level teachers meet with interventionists to determine which students are in need of instruction beyond the classroom. Sometimes it is decided that the student needs a tier 1 intervention that can be delivered by the classroom teacher. The discussion then leads to identifying the greatest needs and how these needs are best met in a tier 2 or tier 3 targeted, research-based intervention group for instruction. Once these decisions have been made for all six grades, interventionists create schedules that will meet the needs of all students requiring additional support.

Students in tiered interventions are progress monitored at least twice a month. A minimum of six data points is needed to make a determination in one of three ways: the student has met the benchmark goal and will no longer need the intervention, or the student is making adequate progress toward closing the achievement gap and the intervention will continue, or the student is not making adequate progress and an adjustment to the intervention being provided will need to be altered to assist the student in closing the achievement gap. Therefore, our tiered intervention groups are fluid. As we go through this process, the classroom teacher and the child's parents are informed of decisions which will directly affect the child's instruction and closing the achievement gap.

While these targeted interventions are intended to close the achievement gap, they are also intended to help build self-esteem in our students. When students begin to feel successful and realize they are "catching up" to their peers through successful instruction, they begin to build a level of confidence that positively impacts their learning. Teachers and students celebrate their successes together.

The staff at JGE realize that the greatest impact we can have on students is to positively promote closing that achievement gap! The rest is history!